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sensible advice is given to the poetical aspirant and the youthful man of letters, and the enthusiasm with which the scholar regards his peculiar vocation is expressed in bold and eloquent terms.

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7.—*Lays of My Home, and other Poems.* By JOHN G. WHITTIER. Boston: William D. Ticknor. 1843. 16mo. pp. 122.

THERE is a little affectation in the title of this volume, which may be excused by the necessity that most authors imagine themselves to be suffering under, of inscribing on their productions some pithy or characteristic *legend*, like the *cartouches* of the Egyptian monuments. The poetry of Mr. Whittier has merits of a high order, though not, perhaps, quite so high as he seems to fancy, if we may judge by a little touch of egotism in the poem entitled "Memories":—

"On life's rough blasts, for blame or praise,  
The school-boy's name has widely flown."

Mr. Whittier commands a vigorous and manly style. His expression is generally simple and to the point. Some passages in his poems are highly picturesque; and at times his imagery is bold and striking. But he is deficient in the sense of proportion. His pieces seem to be the chance sallies of a strong imagination, irregularly excited and roused to fitful action, rather than the well planned and artfully finished works of the accomplished poet. In his poems, thoughts frequently are but loosely connected with each other; indeed, the associating link is sometimes wholly imperceptible. At times, a poem continues long after the sense is completed; then again, the strain suddenly ceases, why or wherefore we know not. From this it happens, that the reader carries away from the perusal of his works a vague recollection of poetical phrases, but no image of an entire and perfected poem. Mr. Whittier is not yet completely master of English versification. With many passages of fine harmony, he has written more that are deformed by harshness, and forced turns of accentuation. The spirit of most of his pieces is highly to be commended; and yet the violence of the partisan introduces here and there a disagreeable discord. What right, for instance, has Mr. Whittier to speak in the virulent tone, which he sees fit to employ, against those clergymen who hold different opinions from his on the disputed question of capital punishment? There is no taste, no Christianity, and no poetry in all this: if Mr. Whittier supposes there is, he mistakes all three.

The most vigorous, finished, and the best conceived pieces in  
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this volume are the “Norsemen,” “Raphael,” and “Massachusetts to Virginia.” These three are worth all the rest of the volume together. The lines are musical almost without a fault; and the imagery and expression are noble and spirit-stirring. Had they been published by themselves, they would have placed the poet’s name higher than the entire collection will raise it: for this is one of the cases, unfortunately not very rare in American poetry, where, in the phrase of Hesiod,

*Νήπιοι, οὐδὲ ἴσασιν ὅσῳ πλέον ἡμισυ παντός.*

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8. — *An Oral System of teaching Living Languages; Illustrated by a Practical Course of Lessons in the French through the Medium of the English.* By JEAN MANESCA. Fourth Edition, revised. New York: Roe Lockwood. 1843. 8vo. pp. 518.

WE have great doubts about the efficacy of the new methods, which are proposed from time to time, for learning the ancient and modern languages with extraordinary facility and speed. They are, for the most part, generalizations of the experience of an individual instructor, who has taught others with ability and success, and wishes that his system may become generally known and approved. But almost every teacher has a scheme of his own, and his success is generally due, not so much to the peculiarity of his method, as to his tact and skill in reducing it to practice, and adapting it to the different characters of his several pupils. It is very problematical, whether the plan will work well in any other hands than those of the inventor. For the pupil, after all, there is but one course,—the diligent use of the grammar and dictionary. If the teacher has time and patience, he may do as Mr. Manesca proposes; he may take away these formidable volumes, and give oral instruction, in the inductive way, by frequent repetition of the principles of syntax and the materials of a vocabulary. Thus he becomes a living grammar and dictionary, and the learner may find it less irksome to take the words from his mouth, than to hunt for them in a book. But the necessity of committing these words and rules to memory, though thus disguised, cannot be obviated; and to effect this, nothing but patient, solitary study will suffice. The volume before us, which is of very respectable dimensions, contains a vast collection of well arranged exercises in French, which instructors may find very useful, whether they adopt Mr. Manesca’s method, or prefer to follow their own.

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